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VERSE

VERSES

BY

WILLIAM C. BRAITHWAITE



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This collection^{*} was made by the author a few months previous to his death, and is here published practically verbatim.

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TO MY FRIENDS

*Friends, amid my rhymings gay
Of fellowship and holiday,
Nature's voice perchance has stirred
In my soul her magic word :
If such word my verse has blessed,
Critics may devour the rest.*

1921

FIVE SONNETS OF FREEDOM

I

FREEDOM is not the surfeit of greedy maw;
Revel of licence, riot of insolent sway,
Plucking of folly from life's gaudy May,
Or gluttonous passion of eye or tooth or claw.
These are man's servitudes beneath the paw
Of the brute æons of his yesterday;
Freedom is when the spirit controls our clay
And orders our being by its inward law—

A duty, yet ever glad with kindling hope,
A birthright, yet it lifts not up with pride,
Rather, a higher world of wider scope,
Where the soul's longing may be satisfied—
An unhorizoned world, whose glories glance
Through this close prison of flesh and circumstance.

II

THINE, Freedom, is a land of distances,
Verdured with meadows, broidered with yellow corn,
Pealing with far-off bells of sabbath-morn,
Sentinelled by soft hills, a land of trees
With myriad foliage whispering to thy breeze,
From whose tall harps thy haunting voice, re-born,
Thrills, mighty in its music, minds forlorn—
A voice, a joy, a life that lifts and frees.

And not the stately elms alone shall know
Thy song-compelling touch, nor pines high-hung
On windy summits; thy wooing fingers go
O'er serried wheat-fields and through meads aglow
With lowliest grasses, till thy spirit hath sung
Her gladness out, that makes the whole world young.

III

SING out thy joy, that tells us of the boon
Of laughing homesteads, gay with children's mirth,
Of open air, and breath of English earth,
And call of the roving ocean's mystic tune,
Of impregnable heart that gave us Ethandune,
Freedom's clear star, shining from Lutterworth,
Milton's great anthem, Blake's ethereal birth,
And all thy storied pageant from morn to noon.

Spirit of Freedom, stir our drowsy land ;
Purge with immortal song our mortal seeing ;
In thy unending service we have hand
To fashion manhood into rabler being,
Till every humblest toiler thy face may see,
And in himself and in his lot be free.

IV

THEY are not free, whose wine of life is spent
For scanty house-room and polluted air,
Pittance of leisure, meagre bodily fare,
And, for the spirit's growth, thin nutriment.
Within a rut of deadening labour pent,
Fancy for them uprears no spiral stair,
Nor may their fingers weave Art's vesture rare,
Nor the mind's franchise heal their discontent.

O'er terraced slope, their unluxuriant vine
Ripens its precious grapes on sunburnt soil ;
They know the trampled wine-press, but the wine,
Blood-red, the fruit of unrequited toil,
This prize, that from their costly vintage drips,
Drained by the great, warms not the people's lips.

V.

AWAKE the people with thy gladdening strain,
Singing of Naseby and of Runnymede,
Of justice kindling in the statesman's deed
That heals with liberty war's rankling pain,
Or thrusts down privilege from its seat of gain,
Or curbs the selfish lust of arrogant greed ;
Blow through our spirits with thy dulcet reed,
Till all men follow, of thy piping fain.

In thy might shall we feel one sovran will,
And in thy guidance find one common way ;
Thy justice shall our deeds with wisdom fill,
Thy music lift us into joyous day,
Where generous fellowship sets free the land
From scornful lip and hayoc of hard hand.

1917

OUR ARYAN SIRES

YOUR manners, dear ancestors Aryan,
In history lost without trace,
Are told by the modern grammarian
With polysyllabical grace :
We knew that you travelled the pace,
When engaged in noctambulant prowls,
But scarcely supposed you a race
Experts in mutations of vowels.

We fancied your cunning barbarian
Made you apt in the use of a mace,
And sadly latitudinarian
When slitting an enemy's face :
But your language we thought a grimace,
Or at best a succession of howls :
How little we guessed at your case,
Experts in mutations of vowels.

We honoured your skill culinarian,
When cooking the spoils of the chase ;
We had learnt that with oysters riparian
Your beards you could deftly erase :
Now Grimm and Max Müller and Sayce
Have put all our heads in wet towels ;
You're the honours, Jack, Queen, King and Ace,
Experts in mutations of vowels.

ENVOY.

Sweet grandsires, your progeny base
No more at your crudities scowls :
O help us to keep in our place !
Experts in mutations of vowels !

THE ATHLETE'S TOMB

*Lines suggested by a broken memorial column of the Roman Period
in the Street of Tombs at Athens.*

THE name is lost : the Athlete's deeds remain,
Graven on bosses round a marble shaft—
Eleven games, eleven victories.
Here was a crag that topped the common level
Of low-lived Athens, an Acropolis
Reared skyward, joyous in its earthly strength,
And bright with glory of the visible soul
Shrined near to God ; here was a citadel
Where truth might raise her head and virtue grow
Amid the onslaught of an evil world.

Men's valorous deeds have root in valorous life ;
The hero is no offspring of the hour
That proves his prowess, multitudinous threads
Of high desire or holy influence
Which others break or tangle he doth weave
Into his being's fibre, every day
Striving by resolute act and heart unflinching
To face the present duty questionless,
With sinews strung to endurance and a mind
Unblenched by fear or thought of recreance.
Such may we deem the victor buried here,
Hewn nobly like this column, fit throughout
To bear the blazonry of lofty deeds,
Yet was the record gathered at the points
Of supreme struggle, and all else lies blank,
Being summed up in his triumphs :—for the rest,
The populace found a relish in his strife ;
It stirred with its fresh taste their jaded palates
And gave him honour patronizingly ;
All Athens rang his fame. That base-born age
Was fired with sudden purpose as he strove,

And dastard eyes blazed with heroic impulse ;
Freeborn they seemed, the heirs of Marathon,
Dawn fronting them with throbs of brightening glow,
And the glad day-spring shining in their souls
(Such force have high emprise and dauntless heart) ;
Next moment, as the bracing influence passed,
Their abject spirits cringed again to Rome,
Slaves as of wont, their manhood ebbd away.

The spark the athlete kindled glowed and died,
But to his heart was cherished, for the man
Loved in the craven throng to see the soul
Start from its coward stupor. Well he knew
To wake from torpor was to face a strife,
As angry as the tumult of the ocean,
As strenuous as the sweeping hurricane.
Yet what was life but struggle ? Oh, the joy
Of breasting peril, when the breath comes thick
And strength seems broken, and the soul outbursting,
Flinging herself through every muscle, sits
Supreme within the man, self-poised, erect,
Smiling at gaze of danger. Pain may come,
Defeat, ay, death, yet 'tis an ecstasy
Worth leaden years to feel the dominant soul
Outstretched in struggle ; only thus she knows
Herself divine, amid the battle-stress
Finding within her God's exulting life.

Our deeds are deathless ; every wave that moulds
A tiny sand-rib hath an infinite past,
An infinite future. From the deep it comes,
The heir of storm-swept centuries, grinding slow
The granite rock to sand ; and to the deep
Back goeth, part of ocean's manifold fret
That wears away a continent. We live
Not to ourselves nor can live ; we are knit

Of all the ages, and rough-hew to-day,
The unbuilted future. Quenchless hero-souls
Hand on the torch to thee, their course achieved.
Carry thy leaping flame through wind and storm :
Others are waiting when thy race is run
To snatch the holy fire. The athlete dies ;
His name is lost ; yet, bound up in the years,
And swaying silently the hearts of men,
Wrought as in adamant, his deeds remain.

1889

BORCOVICUS

ALONG these jagged hills that hold the Tyne,
Bare, vacant hills, for scanty pasture kept,
Imperial troops with splendid eagles swept,
And Thracian cohorts held Rome's far-flung line.
Here the flood-tide of empire set its mark
In fringing wall and frequent sally-tower,
Paused satiate with glut of world-wide power,
Then ebb'd o'er wastes left derelict and dark.

The all-conquering law, the stern, relentless will,
The haughty deed that daunts the tooth of time,
These start to life upon this silent hill
In glamour of the Roman name sublime,
Name proudly borne by troops that manned the Wall,
By Spaniard, swarthy Moor or loyal Gaul.

1907

SAPRICIUS

Based on the Acts of the Martyrdom of Nicephorus, who suffered about A.D. 260, as given in Ruinart's "Acta sincera martyrum."

WRITE quickly, slave ! Death fits his master-key
Into my house, but I will be before him.
Sapricius of Palmyre, the merchant-prince,
Whose seat is with the mighty, strips him bare,
Unlocks this bodily frame that walks the crowd
Imperiously ; drags forth the naked heart,
Imprisoned long from men. That shrivelled thing—
I flinch not at the sight—has been my god,
The god that ere the passing of an hour
Will mid the immortals take its paltry place :
Paltry—that stings me ; I have bent my life
In on myself, this heart is all my wealth,
Scant fare for Charon's ferry to the Shades ;
The coffered gold is dross, the raiment proud
Drops off ; Palmyra's streams and groves are left,
Are swallowed up in desert, infinite desert ;
I am myself the desert, heaven above
Blazes with fire, nor yields me fruitful showers ;
The winds that bear to others precious seed
Come but to toss my tawny mane of sand
And whelm in death the helpless caravan :—
Paltry—and 'tis my all. I will not think it.
Slave, bring me sleeping-draughts and royal robes
To die in. Put the mirror in my hands,
That I once more may see the firm-set lips
And masterful brow.

Ye gods ! How pale it looks !
It seems a thing affrighted with itself ;
Death speaks from these blenched cheeks and cavernous
eyes ;
This is Sapricius, honester by far

Than the sleek face men cringed to. Grisly shape,
That starest at me through this ribbed wreck
Of pride and hate, for thee I bartered heaven,
And from the edge of glory toppled down
Into this hell: But unrelenting death
Hath us at last.

Years since, in Antioch,
I lived, professing Christ, a presbyter,
A servant of God and of my fellow-men—
So men said. One Nicephorus I loved,
Or he loved me;—our friendship was the talk
Of the bazaars;—he twined himself about me,
And drank his life from mine; and oft in church
We shared the sacred cup. His life was love,
And clung about my strength. But, at the last,
Temptation mastered him, and in my pride
I gathered close my robe and looked askance,
And shunned him in the street. With humble words
He sought forgiveness through his friends and came
With suppliant knees repentant to my house,
And craved for love. My love! I hated him,
His friendship galled me, smirched my reputation,
Nor should my name be bandied among men
With a repentant sinner's. Let him grovel;
I would not stoop to raise him.

Then the storm
Of persecution swept upon the Church
And weaklings bent before it. I was strong
And met the governor with words defiant,
Bearding him to the face and all his gods;
Nor could the torture school me to his purpose;
My heart was set to win the martyr's crown
And reign in Heaven. I walked erect to death,
Hardening my face against the mocking crowd;

Then, at the gate, Nicephorus pressed near,
Would in that hour of glory clasp my hand,
And link his name, his starveling name, with mine.

The sight of him elbowed from out my heart
All love to God or man : and at his touch
My soul turned marble and from heaven the stars
Went out in darkness : I could see no crown
Waiting the martyr, could no more in God
Trust, but, instead, the mocking lictors' taunts
Lashed me and on me rows of pitiless eyes
Feasted athirst : the instruments of death
Chilled me ; I felt the snapping of earth's ties,
The clinging of this soft warm flesh about me,
The plunge from the glad sunshine into darkness,
And choosing the sweet respite of life's breath,
My Christ abjured.

Ah ! 'tis the selfsame horror
That holds me now and will not be denied :
How like a canker Hate hath festered me,
Venting his poisoned spleen through every channel.
Thee have I entertained to sap my life ;
I have forgotten what it means to love ;
My faith is dead, my truth has sunk away ;
They are thy prey, whose dry bones strew my desert
With bleached skeletons that haunt the night.
Kind Death ! reprieving Death, I crave thy mercy ;
Let me renew my treason ; I, thy slave,
Would sacrifice again to heathen gods,
See him I hated suffer in my room,
Snatching with his mean hands my martyr-crown,
Confess myself a craven, for one year,
One pitiful year of life. I hate him still ;
I hate myself.

'Tis vain. No mercy comes,
Nor any pity. I myself am death,
Am swallowed up of death. Wrap me in night,
Fold me in thy cold horror, shelterless ;
Loosen these palsied hands that cling to life,
Snatch from me breath ; quench these last flickerings
Of light and love ; bid yawning Hell engulf me ;
Hate hath his empire, Hate alone—and Death.

1890

THE WODEN-STONE

The water-worn rock by Birks Bridge on the Duddon shows the outstretched leg and the body of a wading giant.

WHEN Cumbria's wild and gloomy fells
Lay bound by savage, heathen spells, .
The hardy folk who kept their moot
On terraced law-mound by Fell Foot,
Their packs of herdwick wool made pass
O'er Wrynose down to Ravenglass :
Yet were their spirits struck with fear,
Where Moasdale fronts the mountains sheer,
And, 'mid the storm, the Thunderer, Thor,
Forges his bolts on Mickledore.

Oft must some stalwart carl, I ween,
Have turned aside down Duddon green
And seen along the dancing river
Woden, All-Father and All-Giver,
Wading from pool to pool, all-wise,
Life's kindness welling in his eyes,
His white beard wagging as he croons,
Bowed on his staff, his mystic runes.
There, by dear Duddon, doth he take
His twisted serpent-staff and break
The winter's sleep and wake the spring,
All nature newly fashioning.

Still, carven by the river's hands,
The form of Wading Woden stands ;
Still may you hear his magic rune
Run in the Duddon's wistful tune,
But his kind face and wagging beard
Now from the river's cliff are sheared,
Torn off by Grey Friar of the steep
Who hurled them into Duddon's deep.

For, when the land was won for Christ,
And none to idols sacrificed,
This Grey Friar dwelt upon the scar,
From genial humankind afar,
And, where the lank wolf kept his lair,
Fretted his soul by fast and prayer,
Till, in some raven's horrid cry,
A call he fancied from on high :—
“ Go, mar the Woden-stone abhorred,
“ And great in heaven be thy reward.”

Forth from his hermit-cell he goes ;
The fells were flushed in morning's rose :
Green Duddon Dale the sunlight kissed,
Where gleaming waters twirl and twist ;
Earth was a rapture as he trod
Adown the springing mountain-sod.
He marked a spot with boulders strown,
Above the carven Woden-stone ;
And there a giant rock he hoised
And sheer above the idol poised,
Then sent it bounding down its track
Full into Woden's face, alack !
Yet the fair body, by some charm,
Protecting Duddon held from harm ;
And kindly Woden wadeth still
In his dear stream 'neath Harter's hill,
And still the wise may hear his runes
In Duddon's haunting, whispering tunes,
And still the wonder of his spell
Along his darling dale doth dwell.

THE USES OF THE HALO

THE uses of the halo
Are manifold and great ;
The chief of them I now proceed
Concisely to relate.

It marks most satisfactorily
The true, authentic saint ;
If you've a halo, then you're good ;
If you haven't, then you ain't.

Moreover, in its golden orb,
The owner's name they write,
So saints you never met before
Are recognized at sight.

It changes style from age to age ;
For saints are up to date ;
Now orbéd, now wheeled, now ringed its shape,
Now plain, and now ornate.

It must be hard to bear the weight
Of halos six feet wide,
And get through doors or windows safe,
Or down steep stairs to slide.

If saints should wish to wash their face
Or comb their tangled hair,
They need to take their halo off
And hang it on a chair.

When winds do howl and blasts do blow
Adown the mountain side,
The saint must tie his halo on,
With lace of porpoise-hide.

Once did a saint forget this rede,
And off his halo flew ;
It bounded up the mountain side
And battened on the dew.

Up from the highest peak it whirled
And rolled through azure space ;
And thus the moon a halo got
To deck his saintly face.

A halo is a wilful thing
And takes its own sweet line,
For if the saint is proud or cross
It ceases then to shine.

But when a saint is very good,
The halo's always there,
Till, in the holiest of saints,
It wears away his hair.

Such men can hang it from a bough,
And sit within at ease,
Or in their halo can embark
And cross the stormy seas.

Or, if at home, a raging wolf
Or lion fierce attack,
A curling halo cleaves the air
And hits it in the back.

By many divers instances
And sundry tales of yore,
We could elucidate this theme,
And many, many more.

Suffice it thus to show to all
The sore, exceeding need
Of purchasing a halo
Or—growing one from seed.

You plant the seed upon your head
And water it with care,
And brush it up—but once a week—
With the surrounding hair.

After ten weeks you may perceive
A glimmer, faint at first,
When two months more have glided by,
It blazes with a burst.

Then for a month you tie it on,
Quite firmly, with a lace,
And if you sow and plant again,
Perchance you bag a brace.

The second one in lavender
You lay up in a cloth,
A piece of camphor placed within
To keep it from the moth.

And thus, O friends, from day to day
Your halos shall not faint ;
And you will have, where'er you go,
The hall-mark of the saint.

1895-1898

FLORENCE TO HER CATHEDRAL- BUILDERS

THE city greets her sons, her goodliest,
Openeth to them her heart ; for she would build
Out of her worth a worthy House of God—
A people's prayer made visible in stone,
A people's service carved in adamant,
A people's praise uplifted evermore
In the clear-shining peace of Arno's vale.
Florence hath lavished grace upon your lives ;
Requite her now, for she hath need of you.
Yea, ye shall gather from her common will
Strength ampler than your own, from her high
soul
Shall catch a heart to mate her great emprise.
Florence shall speak forth her divinest thought
And find through you great-hearted utterance.
Oh, ye have eyes to see God's loveliness
And hands that fashion it for all to see,
Because the city's grace is in your life ;
Ye blossom, rooted in her paradise.
And so ye shall not rear a house apart,
Standing aloof in glory, but your work
Shall be most beauteous for its fellowship
With all the city's lowly loveliness.
The belfry's lily-tower of tenderness
Shall lift the grace of Florence up to God ;
The dome, broad-rooted in the people's will,
Fronting its myriad life, shall think no scorn
To wear the red-brown tiles all Florence wears
And wed its greatness to her common life :
Thus shall your deed express her noble soul,
Compacted of the general will of all,
Formed of ten thousand humble greatnesses,

Immortal Florence, kindling all her sons,
Made through their loftiest effort manifest,
Shall bloom the peerless flower of Italy :
Therefore requite her love ; she needeth you.

1900

BROTHER JUCUNDUS

My verses are based on the story as told to me in 1900 by Joshua Rowntree, of Scarborough. S. Baring-Gould gives it, in a variant form, in his "Yorkshire Oddities." "In dulci jubilo" means, I suppose, "with a glad shout." Cf. The Vulgate of Ps. xlvii. 5, and 2 Sam. vi. 15.

IN the merry days of bluff King Hal,
York Fair was the place for festival ;
And there on the morn when begins my tale
Jock Bacon lay gorged with its cakes and ale ;
And, penniless, headachy, still half-drunk,
Quoth he : "Gramercy, I'll turn a monk,
Forsake the sins of the flesh in a trice,
And get me ready for Paradise."

No sooner said than the deed was done,
And in St. Mary's, at set of sun,
Jock, now into Brother Jucundus made,
Knelt on the abbey-floor and prayed.

A year and a day passed by, I wist,
And never a vigil the brother missed ;
Then came again the Martinmas Fair,
And the flesh-pots of Egypt he longed to share ;
So he followed the devil out of bounds,
And sought the ale and the merry-go-rounds,
Disgracing cassock and cowl and hood
Before the delighted multitude,
Who clapped their hands to hear him sing
From the dizziest flight of the highest swing :
 " In dulci jubilo,
 Up, up, up we go."

Alas ! in the heyday of his mirth
His brethren hunted him to earth ;

In a wheelbarrow they laid him prone,
While he chanted, though in a minor tone,
 "In dulci jubilo,
 Up, up, up we go."

At the abbey-pump his head they douse
Then wheel him in to the chapter-house,
Where the Abbot finds that, *instigante*
Diabolo scandalo flagrante,
They must kill the body to save the soul
And wall him up in a narrow hole.
Jock, asked by the court what he had to say,
Hiccoughed once more his drunken lay,
Though in the cellars he changed his song,
Dimly perceiving something wrong,
And wailed : *"In dulci jubilo,*
 Down, down, down we go."

Behold the brother walled up to die
With a loaf of bread and a pitcher by ;
He felt—the very reverse of well—
And fancied himself, good soul, in Hell ;
So he called on all the saints above
And gave the wall a prodigious shove—
On the further side, as it chanced to hap—
And heard the stones and the mortar snap :
Then with every muscle and threw astrain
He pushed with might and he pushed with main,
And felt for his fault sincere contrition,

 Till, through the wall, with battered hands,
Into St. Leonard's he forced admission,

 Which hard by St. Mary's Abbey stands,
Cheek by jowl they dwelt like brethren in unity,
Though this party-wall semi-detached each community ;
His wits he there got quickly together,
And tripped upstairs in the highest feather.

Now a rule^o of silence St. Leonard's kept—
A rule that was rarely overstepped—
When he mingled among them all were dumb ;
Judge too if Jucundus kept not mum ;
They had their thoughts ; he had his, no doubt ;
But once inside he was not found out ;
And thus he lived for a year and a day
In a highly moral and monkish way,
And when the cellarer died, good soul,
They put the keys under Jock's control ;
They kept but little wine in the bin,
And the beer they brewed was uncommonly thin,
And Jucundus appeared a man most sober.

This fell in the middle of October ;
But a few days later, at Martin's Mass,
The devil gripped him again, alas !
And down to the cellars stole our monk
And soon was comfortably drunk ;
For, in spite of scruples, pricks and qualms, he
Had broached the hostel's butt of Malmsey.

That eve they waited long for beer,
And none might ask the why or where ;
Their frugal fare untasted lay ;
Some, under breath, did curse or pray,
Till spake, in accents slow and clear,
• The oldest monk, " I want my beer."
" Amen, Amen ! " the rest replied,
And to the cellars straightway hied ;
There lay Jucundus fallen from grace,
In woefully befuddled case,
Singing : "*In dulci jubilo,*
Up, up, up we go."

They held a conclave, silent-lipped,
Within St. Leonard's gloomy crypt ;
Each pointed at the unmended wall,
Now noticed by them first of all,
As if to say : " To save his soul,
Immure him in that narrow hole."
And so our monk a second time
Was walled up for his heinous crime,
With bread and water as before,
And carolling gaily o'er and o'er ;
 " In dulci jubilo,
 Up, up, up we go."

Now it chanced in St. Mary's that selfsame day
A brother came to the crypts to pray ;
And there, remembering Jucundus' fault,
Passed to the furthest, gloomiest vault,
Where a year before they had walled him in
To shrive the soul from the body's sin.
Lo, from the wall comes music rare ;
The wondering brother kneels in prayer ;
Have walls then speech as well as ears,
Or is it magic that he hears :
 " In dulci jubilo,
 Up, up, up we go."

Of Brother Jucundus the merry voice is,
Though surely, by now, he in Heaven rejoices.
So, to elucidate the mystery,
The convent gathers in consistory,
Where they talked bad Latin, scarcely quotable,
But all agreed that a miracle notable
Had been vouchsafed to their old foundation,
A lawful matter for jubilation.
And still the song went on in the wall,
Till an old monk said : " 'Tis he, after all ;

'Tis Jucundus in every quiver and quaver,
Now Mary be praised for her marvellous favour."
Then they pulled down the wall and disclosed our saint,
Lustily singing, as fresh as paint,
With a loaf of bread and some Adam's ale
Lying beside him, scarcely stale,
And a fragrant scent about the monk
Of the Malmsey wine that he had drunk.

In fine, to finish the merry story,
St. Mary's gained her a blaze of glory,
And the brother, saved in body and soul,
Who had pined a year in his narrow hole—
So the monks of St. Mary's thought—
Soon to their abbacy was brought,
And ruled the convent with great distinction
Until the day of its extinction.

1900

THE BELFRY OF ISONE

Isona is the highest village in the upper valley of the Vedeggio, in the Canton Ticino. The story is told in Vittore Pellandini's "Tradizioni Popolari Ticinesi." The chime is taken from the same book, and means, "John, give me bread, I am hungry, give me bread."

"JUVANN—DAM PANG—GO FAM—DAM PANG,"

So the bells of Isona rang ;
And, with their clanging, a hullabaloo
Split the ear from the village too—
Great bells, tinkling bells, cow-bells, goat-bells,
Cracked bells, jingling bells, dinner-bells, horse-bells,
Blaring goat-horns, tin-cans clattering,
Such a hammering, such a battering,
Isona certainly would be able
To take its turn as the Tower of Babel.

'Tis as bitter a winter as men may know ;
Monte Bar is smothered in snow,
Caval Drossa is sheeted white,
Vedeggio's torrent is frozen tight,
All the beasts must be stable-fed,
The weather is like a hundred devils,
Why should Isona lose its head
In laugh and caper and noisy revels ?
Why this clamour and clash and clang,
"JUVANN—DAM PANG—GO FAM—DAM PANG" ?

Look, and soon you will see good reason
For a jubilee e'en in this horrible season ;
Look at the belfry, tall and proud,
Square and straight, seven storeys high,
Ever at watch 'mid snow and sky ;
No wonder the bells are pealing loud ;
Chilled no more is its bare, grey stone
In a frost that freezes men to the bone ;

It is dressed in fustian stout and warm
In this terrible spell of snow and storm,
Dressed in a cosy fustian-frock
All the way up to the weather-cock ;
For the folk of Isonne could not bear
To see their campanile struggling
To live out the night with nought to wear,
While they 'neath feather-beds were snuggling,
And so they voted money enough
And sent to Lugano for the stuff.

Six mules with fustian duly loaded
Were up the mountain pathway goaded ;
For sixty hours some sixty wives
Stitched day and night as for their lives ;
The frock was fashioned in four long strips
Which buttoned over at the lips ;
To each an odd-shaped piece they stitch
To fit the roof at the proper pitch.
The men with pulleys hoisted amain
And tied the strips to the weather-vane,
Buttoning the four together well,
Leaving an armhole for each bell.
By the fourth day the work was ended
And the belfry dressed in her raiment splendid ;
No frost could pierce the jacket upon her,
To San Lorenzo be all the honour.

* * * * *

" JUVANN—DAM PANG—GO FAM—DAM PANG,"
So the bells of Isonne rang :
Medeglia's women heard the glee
And hurried over the hill to see ;
Medeglia lies but a half-hour off,
Where hearts are hard and the people scoff ;
Medeglia never a thought could spare
For its steeple's plight in the nipping air,

But had left it frozen, alone and bare ;
But Medeglia nourished a bitter spite
'Gainst Ison's simple ways of right
As the evil do towards the sons of light.

Medeglia waited the midnight hour,
When wicked devices have full power ;
Then stole across at a hang-dog pace
Till all a-shiver they reached the place ;
But no peril troubled Ison's heads,
Asleep under mighty feather-beds :
So Medeglia's hags their shears outwhipped
And three good yards off the fustian snipped,
Then, crooning over an evil song,
They slunk back home from their deed of wrong.

On the morn, when Ison's people woke,
They stared at the belfry, simple folk,
Till at last the oldest and wisest spoke ;—
“ My friends,” he said, “ we have dwelt in blindness,
Mark the reward of lovingkindness ;
For, as long as we gave our belfry no care,
It shrivelled and pined in the pinching air,
But now we have covered it warm and tight
It has grown three yards in a single night :
Another *festa* to-day we'll keep ;
Let the bells from their sleeve-holes leap.”

“ JUVANN—DAM PANG—GO FAM—DAM PANG ” :—
So the bells of Ison rang.

And, in proof that the tale which I tell is true,
I've been to Ison the belfry to view ;
Its height, as I said, was seven storeys before,
And now it has grown one storey more:

1921

MAZZINI AT ROME

UPFLAMED thy soul through the night :—
Dispurpled Rome at the sight
Swept thy fire through her being and rose,
A city of valour, to face her foes.

Upflamed through the night thy fire :—
Rome, heart of thy heart's desire,
Drank her life from thy spirit and trod
The earth as a shining angel of God.

Outburnt ere the dawn thy flame :—
Rome sank again into shame.

Failure? Not if we minded the whole ;
That life-flame kindled a nation's soul.

1896

MAN'S PILGRIMAGE

IN rude days pre-scientific,
Man was sunk in mere Paganity,
Owned a temper calorific,
Fluent only in profanity :
His prehensile Simianity
Loved arboreally to flit,
Then fear-ridden sub-humanity
Stuffed with stones its pilgrim-kit.

When we read time's hieroglyphic
Of millennium-long immanity,
Not entirely beatific
Seems our progress in urbanity.
With a spark of Christianity
Have the years our manners lit,
Yet with groping hands humanity
Stuffs with bombs its pilgrim-kit.

Dexterous formulas prolific
Cover over our inanity ;
Catch-words serve for soporific,
Thought is perilous insanity :
All ideals count as vanity,
Facts we reckon to admit :
Meanwhile realist humanity
Stuffs with wind its pilgrim-kit.

ENVY.

Who will teach us simple sanity,
Wisdom bring instead of wit ?
Then will fully-fledged humanity
Stuff with Truth its pilgrim-kit.

CHANT ROYAL

STRIVE for the highest : what avails the May,
When dance with twinkling feet the linkèd hours,
To eyes who mark not Fancy's fingers gay
Plucking their treasure of enamelled flowers ?
Un sullied hearts and finer vision we need
The delicate web that holds our life to heed :
Expand thy senses ; on the azure sky
Gaze, till its deepest blue pervades thine eye ;
Through the swift stream the pebbly bottom scan,
Till the whole world seems water hurrying by :
Lofty attempt alone ennobles man.

Strive for the highest. Though with feet of clay
Man spurns the virtue that his spirit dowers,
Yet may his courage craggy Truth assay,
Where in mid-heaven hang her clustering towers.
Whither great Verulam and Plato lead,
Follow who dare in those high fields to feed.
About your steps the amaranth shall lie,
While far below, where royal eagles fly,
Hesper, athwart the æther's narrow span,
Shines in your grasp—the Star of Destiny :
Lofty attempt alone ennobles man.

Strive for the highest : thy full manhood lay
Against all odds ; resume thy squandered powers ;
Diffused along life's marishes we stray,
While all its manifold greatness should be ours :—
Beauty of mountain and of tiniest seed,
Beauty of forest-tree and lowly weed :
Thy Mistress, Art, with tireless service ply ;
Fresh grace in her least loveliness espy,
Exact obedience to her fancies plan ;

All her delightful whimsies satisfy ;
Lofty attempt alone ennobles man.

Strive for the highest : not for thee the pay
Of the crowd's plaudits, not for thee the bays
Where soft-voiced pleasures lull the hours away :
Count thyself happy that thy purpose scours •
Its passionate channel where no lawny mead,
Fringed with swimming lily and tall reed,
Allures to sluggard current. Fameless die ;
Some kindlier age thy work may justify ;
Held truthward, life achieveth all it can ;
The final judgment goes not far awry ;
Lofty attempt alone ennobles man.

Strive for the highest, and to Heaven pray,
When sunshine warms or smart of failure sours ;
Singers and Seers in God's arbours stay
Blessed by His luminous air and quickening showers.
"Add to thy best," so runs Art's simple creed,
"A gleam divine as aureole to thy deed."
Then shall thy verse, 'mid songless stretches dry,
Wells and a space of grateful shade supply,
Oasis where some sand-parched caravan
Life's desolate marge of desert may defy :
Lofty attempt alone ennobles man.

ENVOY.

Never, O princely heart, thy birth deny ;
Peerless be thou, because thy quest is high :
Write on the world thy blessing, not thy ban ;
Hold life in trust thy Lord to glorify ;
Lofty attempt alone ennobles man.

1908

MOUNTAIN, LAKE AND RIVER

A MOUNTAIN SONG

Crag and misty summit,
Ye are ours to win,
Where you drop a plummet
Sheer into the llyn :
Up the screes we're busy,
Then, with hand-holds tight,
By the rock-wall dizzy,
Press we to the height.

CHORUS.

Welcome, giddy Glyders,
Carnedds, Snowdon tall ;
He who well considers
Loves you, one and all.

How our bones are itching
For thy peak, Y-Garn,
For the Devil's Kitchen,
And Bochlwyd's tarn,
For thy menhirs mighty,
Truculent Tryfaen,
Your *elixir vitæ*
Makes us whole again.

Here upon the saddle,
Under Carnedd's height,
Sit we all a-straddle,
Vales to left and right,
Drink the sunshine glorious,
Breathe of air our fill,
Quaff new life, victorious
Over every ill.

Thousand years may weather
Moel Siabod's steep,
Couched o'er velvet heather,
Ranged by mountain-sheep :
Still these summits olden,
Kings of earth confest,
'Gainst the sunset golden
Heave their purple crest.

Hail, ye strenuous mountains,
Gird us with your might ;
Wake in us the fountains
Of your pure delight ;
Brace us with your bluster ;
Hold us in your sway,
When at work we muster
After holiday.

1906

LLYN BARFOG

Who would not sit with kindled eyes,
Hid in the hillside moss and brake,
Waiting the hour when daylight dies
And white-robed fairies their pleasure take,
When grey maidens rise from the reedy lake
And elfin kine are roaming,
And the hounds of the mist for the mountain make,
At Llyn Barfog in the gloaming.

In days of yore lived a lover wise,
Whom the fairies pitied for love's dear sake ;
They gave him elfin kine for prize,
With garlands of lilies he soothed their ache ;
They sang to him by the reedy lake,
Their shimmering hair a-combing,
But never a kiss his love might slake
At Llyn Barfog in the gloaming.

And still, till the evening dims the skies
And garners the clouds with his rake,
Till hooded Cader in darkness lies,
And the tree-tops shiver and shake,
With the voice of the Night awake,
Till their kine, slow-pacing, come homing,
The maidens sport on the reedy lake
At Llyn Barfog in the gloaming.

ENVOY.

Prince, riot of feasting-hall forsake,
To-morrow the tankard foaming,
To-night we watch by the reedy lake,
At Llyn Barfog in the gloaming.

THE FELLSIDE

THE heather, high upon the hill,
The branching bracken, turning gold,
The rocks whose crannies mosses fill,
Mantling the fellside, fold on fold,
What tells their world so fragrant-fair
To dwellers in the lower air ?

Couched on the height, I hear the train,
The trotting hoof and motor-horn ;
The tide of tourists flows amain
By dusty road, this August morn ;
Life there is eager ; here so still
In the high hollows of the hill.

Here, slopes of purple heather-bell,
Forests of fronded brake and fern
Through changing glories sink and swell,
As the slow seasons patient turn :
How shall mere vagrants to and fro
The rapture of such beauty know ?

The radiant morn that climbs the steeps,
Noon's azure light, eve's ruby glow,
The goblin moonshine's dusky deeps,
The mist, the tempest and the snow—
To win their gladness we must dwell
Blithe years beside the springing fell.

Then may we gain the mystic lore,
Learnt by the men whose hardy breed
Owns, as of right, the hill and moor,
Thrifty of speech and stout of deed ;
To us the fellside, wise and wild,
Shall talk as father to his child.

DUDDON CALLING

WHEN grey skies are round me clinging,
And life's dusky shades are falling,
Blithely springing into singing,
Hears my heart the Duddon calling.

From the mountain's misty shoulders
Dance his waters, babbling, brawling,
And 'mid boulders, thousand boulders,
Hears my heart the Duddon calling.

Sabbath-calm the river hallows,
Rippling, sparkling, splashing, sprawling,
In the shallows, gleaming shallows,
Hears my heart the Duddon calling.

From some wonder-hoard his speech is,
Crooning, droning, dreaming, drawling,
By white beaches, down long reaches,
Hears my heart the Duddon calling.

Riot through the heather keeping,
Giant hills his green dale walling,
Downward sweeping, laughing, leaping,
Hears my heart the Duddon calling.

Earth may never wholly win me,
With her cares my spirit thralling,
For within me, far within me,
Hears my heart the Duddon calling.

1913

LANTHWAITE GREEN

Do you know my home, my home on Lanthwaite Green,
Where the mountain softens downward to the lake?

Never grass so sweet and green
Springs in all the world I ween,
Bedded 'mid the moss and heather and the broadly-
branching brake;
That's my home, my darling home on Lanthwaite
Green.

Do you know Grasmoor, the mountain of my home,
As I know it in each hollow and each steep?

Who have climbed its gullies bare,
And have found it passing fair,
In whose life its form is mirrored and its strength is
rooted deep,
Rising ever o'er my home on Lanthwaite Green.

Do you know my home-lake, Crummock, shining clear,
Restful realm of liquid sunshine 'neath the hills?

Have you bathed in every pool,
Felt life's fretful fever cool,
Can you wonder why I love it, why its peace my bosom
fills,
Flowing ever by my home on Lanthwaite Green?

Oh, the bliss of home, my home on Lanthwaite Green,
Where the mountain softens downward to the lake!

Far from thee, I still shall hold
All thy wealth of hoarded gold,
For thy life and love within me in my boyhood did I
take,
And I keep till death my home on Lanthwaite Green.

1899

“ THE FELLOWS ARE LEARNING TO SWIM ”

• THE biped we designate boy,
• Who wolfs the last crumb from his platter,
• Comes hither in height of his joy
To bathe in the shallows and chatter,
The tremulous water to splatter
O'er sinewy skeleton slim,
When with dive and with frolic and spatter
The fellows are learning to swim.

The battles earth-shaking of Troy,
(As we learn, if in Homer we smatter),
Were but fustian and cheap corduroy
By the side of this glorious clatter.
They gurgle and wallow and batter,
With quite an invincible *vim*,
Then feet o'er the white shingle patter ;
The fellows are learning to swim.

The exploits of Roland and Roy
Seem only a tag-rag and tatter ;
The deeds of King Arthur annoy ;
For here 'mid the shimmer and shatter,
As mad as the Hare and the Hatter,
In the joy of enfranchised limb,
Far over the river they scatter ;
The fellows are learning to swim.

ENVOY.

To me, friend, the pastime is flatter,
For I watch from the sedge-covered rim,
As a man does at fifty. No matter ;
The fellows are learning to swim.

“ IN THRONGING TOWN NO LONGER DWELL ”

In thronging town no longer dwell ;
The bracing hills are yours,
The ruby of the heather-bell,
The spaces of the moors.

A song within your soul shall run
And mystic wisdom teach,
From the glad life around you won,
A song surpassing speech.

The honeybees are in the song,
The lark's lilt from the blue,
The hillside stream that laughs along,
Airs fresh with upland dew.

Glad song for spirits bright and fair,
Whose hearts blithe nature fills,
True owners of these worlds of air,
Of mantling moor and hills.

In thronging town no longer dwell ;
The bracing hills are yours,
The ruby of the heather-bell,
The spaces of the moors.

1910

BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE LIGHT

SHINE, rose-blue mountains from your lofty home ;
Shine, rose-red rocks beside the gleaming sea ;
Shine, white-winged gulls over the white-lipped foam ;
Brothers and sisters of the light are we.

Shine, hillsides, heather-flushed and bracken-green,
With flower and moss and turf divinely dight ;
Shine, lakes and silvery becks, like jewels seen ;
We keep to-day a festival of light.

In bliss of freshness from the translucent air,
In bliss of beauty from the transfiguring sun,
In bliss of life upspringing everywhere,
We, the glad children of the light, are one.

1911

THE LOWLY GRASSES AND LITTLE HILLS

I KNOW a kindly, bluff grey hill
Above the Western seas,
A little hill for a score of sheep
And a myriad heather-bees.

The sun is kissing its tangled green
Of bracken and moss and sward ;
For the lowly grasses and little hills
Make the beauty of the Lord.

And, when I am skilled in their secret lore,
And have found all little things great,
I shall walk the earth with a lover's eyes,
Made clean from scorn and hate.

1921

SEA AND SHORE

A WAVE-SONG

(Suggested by Anglo-Saxon poetry, "The Seafarer," etc.)

WORDS for a wave-song weave I together,
Seafarers' staves for swinging oars.

Might over men hath the music of ocean,
The laugh of the lone sea the lap of the water,
Cleft by the keel kissed by the oar.
Swayed by its song-craft soul-compelling,
Luring the life away ; leave we the hearth-side,
Wife-love and wean-love wassail-fellowship,
Mirth and mead-drinking meadow-sweet summer ;
Steer we the seamews' way ; seek we the whale-path,
The desolate deep of dirge-droning waves.
Wildly the weltering seas wolf-pack pitiless
Howl in their hunger. Hoarsely the storm-birds,
Ravens wreck-fain, round us clamour.
Hangs heaven over us, heaving seas circle us,
Waifs in a wave-waste, wide as the world.

Low under looming clouds, low over surging waves,
Forth through grey fastnesses, fly we death-greedy—
Crane-necked cormorants, cleaving the pathless deep.
Narrow night-watches numb our weary limbs,
Hemmed in a hollow ship, hard is our lot.
Bitter breast-cares bow us peril-bent,
Folk-lorn and feast-lorn, far from the haunts of men,
For the glad glee-song hearing the gannet's cry,
Gabble of gulls, groaning of straining oars,
For laughter of heroes, for whetting of swords.

Wherefore haunt we the hazardous main ?
Wherefore hearken we to his hoarded spell,
Moaning, murmuring, multitudinous,
Thralling the thirsting heart with his thronging voice,
Wooing our' wistfulness with his witchery ?

The song of the sword, smiting on shields,
Waketh the warrior wearied of feasting ;
The sweep of the scythe, swathing the meadow,
Sweet as the song of birds sounds to the mower.
Merry mead-cups, music of alehorns,
Gladden the gleeman. Goodlier the anthem,
Sinking in silence, shattering the heavens,
Crooning, crashing, calling in monotone,
Many-mooded, the melodious,
Vast, reverberant voice of the ocean.

Hearken, heroes, hewn from the heath of men,
Sons of the storm-wind, saplings of ocean ;
Hark to the hundred-stringed harp of the main !
Dwelleth its dirge in the deeps of our lives,
Breathed is its burden through our banishment.

“ Free be your faring, furrowing the salt-wold ;
O’er the wind-winnowed waste wander at will ;
For ye are free. Look with fearless gaze
Into the eyes of death, eager worm of prey,
For ye are free, fangless is death for you.
Go forth with great hearts, grapplers of danger,
Proving your prowess on the pale sea-floor,
For ye are free. Flinch not at hardship,
Buffeted, baffled, bruised by the tempest,
Swept by the stark hail, stiffened by snow-flaw.
Fare forth free through the foam and the gloaming.
Far as the floor of waves foldeth the mid-earth ;
High as the heaven-roof hangeth its rafters,
Reaches your realm of life, ranges your franchise :
For ye are free, sons of the foaming main ! ”

Hark to his haunting song, heaving and hushing ;
Sweet is his speech to me, spirit-entrancing ;

How all my life's throbbing strings thrill to his
harping :

One with the waves am I, weft with their yearnings ;
Wide as the winding sea waketh my life,
Waketh, wayering under the white stars ;
Riseth rosy-red, robed in the sunrise ;
Gleameth golden, gloaming folding it ;
Slumbereth shrouded in the sable night.

In stately ships on a sea of song
Sail forth our souls on the song of the sea ;
Swan-winged, swan-white, sail into freedom,
Wafted from walls and bars into a wide world.
Furrows of flocking waves falling and rising,
Lift us exultingly into life's gladness,
Full as the flooding joy flowing about us,
Fresh as the feather-spray flung from our oar-sweeps,
Free as the fleet wind Coursing the fields of air.

Heroes, hear ye the whispering main,
Brooding, billowing, breaking in speech ?
Wondrous his word-board— waves swift-footed,
Foam-flecked, foam-fleeced, flashed forth half-uttered,
Teaching us truth-song, tales of soothfastness.
Nithings and niggards know not his word-craft,
Nor can they know it. Never telleth he
Pelf or pettiness. Peerless his harping,
Sings he the stream of life swaying us onward,
Spring-time and summer, swinging tide-race,
Surging sea-flood, sunlight and west-wind,
Lifting aloft our lives into freedom,
Fare forth free, sons of the foaming main !
1895

“THE HAUNTING MUSIC OF THE OCEAN’S CALL”

Sons of the Sea, whose lives the billows’ lore
Hath filled with longings for adventurous quest,
Who, combating the hungry breakers’ roar,
Man’s utmost heart of daring have expressed,
And now ’mid tranquil ooze and sea-wrack rest,
In your glad speech the winds of heaven blew,
When Viking songs of dauntless derring-do
Sped the long evenings round the feasting-hall,
Witching and wonderful, because ye knew
The haunting music of the ocean’s call.

Ye mariners, who sought the unknown shore
Beyond the purple limits of the West,
And to your lords the New World’s treasure bore,
Who wagered all upon the truth ye guessed;
Ye Devon men, who made of death a jest,
And o’er the Seven Seas your pennants flew,
Who the proud pomp of Castille overthrew,
Strewing the waves with foundered galleons tall,
Like voice of mistress in your spirits grew
The haunting music of the ocean’s call.

Ye voyagers through Arctic winters froze,
By grinding floe and chilling berg distressed,
And ye, who Isles of Spice did first explore,
And to wild coral reefs, uncharted, pressed,
All ye who owned the sovran Sea’s behest,
Nor at the feet of other kings would sue,
But gave the main allegiance, stout and true,
Afar from servile courts and senates’ brawl,
A mighty song of Freedom ravished you,
The haunting music of the ocean’s call.

ENVOY.

Land of the Free, whose men of pith and thew
The beckoning billows to thy isle first drew,
Who standest sure, with the Sea's moat for wall,
List to the strains that still thy sons would woo,
The haunting music of the ocean's call.

1908

BALLADE OF SHIPS

WHERE are the ships of long ago,
The Tyrian galley's dalliance,
Disdainful Persia's empty show,
The beakèd trireme's arrogance?
Their gallant pomp and circumstance,
Flouting aloud the fret of time,
Storms heeded not, nor battle's chance;
Their timbers now are sunk in slime,

The Northmen's keels no longer go
Questing across the waves' expanse,
Nor coracles from Ireland blow
Exiles who would the Cross advance;
No more, 'mid glamour of romance,
Up gilded barge fair ladies climb,
Nor vessels gleam with mail and lance;
Their timbers now are sunk in slime.

No towering galleons mop and mow,
Nor Barbary rovers prank and prance,
Nor the tall English frigates throw
Their challenge to the ships of France:
They in dim weed make tarriance
Who the stars jostled in their prime;
Their hulks the fishes view askance;
Their timbers now are sunk in slime.

ENVOY.

Prince, unto death the proudest dance;
His knell attends our lustiest chime;
On man's brave works the brief hours glance;
Their timbers now are sunk in slime.

1908

“ OH, SAIL WITH ME ! ”

Oh, sail with me the wine-dark surges,
When fresh the western gale is blowing,
And the green waves, their white lips showing,
On hungry shingle boom their dirges.
Not when pale sea in pale sky merges
And summer calm o'er all is glowing ;
Oh, sail with me the wine-dark surges,
When fresh the western gale is blowing.

When life's keen storm to effort urges
And failure may mean overthrowing,
Then sail with me the billows flowing,
Whose bracing strife the spirit purges ;
Oh, sail with me the wine-dark surges,
When fresh the western gale is blowing.

1909

THE KING OF CHIT

Up to 1824, the sailors of Sidmouth had the custom of annually visiting the Chit Rock, below Peak Hill, and crowning a " King of Chit " with mimic pomp and circumstance.

If men but knew my homely wit,
Right royal robes were my array ;
I'd be the merry King of Chit.

Upon my rocky throne I'd sit,
A simple monarch, wise and gay,
If men but knew my homely wit.

The ships that eastward, westward flit
My Laws of Nations should obey,
I'd be the merry King of Chit.

The gabbling gulls should round me twit,
A Parliament of counsel they,
If men but knew my homely wit.

Bronzed sailor-folk with fishing kit
Should cheerily own my honest sway ;
I'd be the merry King of Chit.

Blithe fellowship my realm should knit ;
And work should be like holiday.
If men but knew my homely wit,
I'd be the merry King of Chit.

1909

BALLADE OF MACKEREL

THE breeze sets my face all a-tingle ;
The air of the morning is nipping ;
The lasses run down from the dingle
With laughter and shouting and skipping.
Round our cobble the ripples are lipping ;
Shove off, and be quick with the oar ;
The net through your fingers goes slipping,
For mackerel are in by the shore.

To catch them your aim must be single ;
They're clever at flopping and flipping ;
Your nerves they may jangle and jingle,
But pay out the net without tripping :
The corks in the water go dipping ;
Your hands with the tackle are sore :
Now out to the beach, the oars shipping ;
For mackerel are in by the shore.

Come haul in the net up the shingle ;
Its meshes with silver are dripping ;
Where pebbles and water commingle,
The mackerel are whopping and whipping.
The fish in the baskets we're tipping,
And gaily we count out the score ;
The last from its mesh we are stripping ;
For mackerel are in by the shore.

ENVOY.

So now we'll be off, just equipping
Our table with spoils three or four ;
The day has been perfectly ripping ;
For mackerel are in by the shore.

1909

“ THE WINDS ARE STILL ”

THE winds are still upon the deep ;
No shadows o'er the landscape creep ;
 The trees that all awry are growing,
 Through the sou'-wester's boisterous blöwing,
Rest, with their myriad leaves asleep.

As the dawn wakes, what roses heap
The ruby ocean ? With what leap
 Of light the sun arises, glowing ?
 The winds are still.

Oft on Truth's cloud-hung, wind-blown steep
Doubt and dismay around me sweep ;
 But ever, after storm's o'erthrowing,
 There comes a day of God's bestowing,
Earth, sea and air a sabbath keep ;
 The winds are still.

1908

“ I HAVE ESCAPED ”

I HAVE escaped awhile the dusty way :
I taste again the savour of the sea,
And merry amid merry children play :
The laughing waves have set my spirit free.

Out of life's traffic to tranquillity ;
From the road's glare to dancing waters gay ;
For hurry, the tide's pulse of mystery—
I have escaped awhile the dusty way.

Into blue heaven melts the pale blue bay :
The azure headland stretches far to lee :
Over wide wastes of billows from Biscay
I taste again the savour of the sea.

The fresh salt breezes with my heart agree :
The August of my life is turned to May ;
I am grown young with ocean's buoyant glee,
And merry amid merry children play.

Across the main my roving fancies stray :
Of larger worlds I hold the silver key ;
Though in life's narrow vessel I must stay,
The laughing waves have set my spirit free.

Oh, spell of ocean, welcome wizardry,
Thy week is worth a cycle of Cathay :
Thy luminous calm restores my soul ; with thee
The dust of earth, its clamour and affray
I have escaped.

1909

THE SHELL

THE joy of the wave in this shell of delight is caught,
Rare home of pendulous life from some weed-hung
cave,
Fresh from whose twilight wonders its sheen hath
brought
The joy of the wave.

Out of dim amethyst grottoes that pebbles pave,
Where 'mid waver of tangle the sea-nymphs wrought,
Into our world the tempest its spirals drave.

Carven by delicate fingers and cunning thought,
Telling of marvellous lore that the Tritons gave,
Often its whispering mouth to my ear hath taught
The joy of the wave.

1908

WEED AND SHELL

WORRIED by foaming sea-wolves fell,
Up on the kindly shore is flung
Delicate spoil of weed and shell.

Dread are the hair-breadth tales ye tell,
Torn from the rock-ledge where ye clung,
Worried by foaming sea-wolves fell.

Out of your tangle weave a spell,
Cowry and limpet round it hung,
Delicate spoil of weed and shell,

Story of rescued damozel,
Prisoned the ocean caves among,
Worried by foaming sea-wolves fell.

Pearly lips sing the verses well ;
Mermaids gave you a siren's tongue,
Delicate spoil of weed and shell.

Into my ear the music swell,
As ye have piped it since time was young,
Worried by foaming sea-wolves fell,
Delicate spoil of weed and shell.

1908

ACROSS THE SEA

ACROSS the sea, the white-winged ship
Doth out of vision slowly dip :
 She trusts alone in heart and skill,
 For none may tell her good or ill,
From waves that taunt with curling lip.

The goring rock her sides may rip,
Or freezing floe the timbers nip,
 Before with cod her hatches spill
 Across the sea.

The voyage done, what hands shall grip
Loved wife and weans that father clip,
 What hard-won gains his home shall fill,
 What wages pay his dauntless will ?
It takes a man for such a trip
 Across the sea.

1908

UPON THE DECK

UPON the deck we gaily flit
And link our arms and air our wit ;
Or, in our deck-chairs, idly chatter ;
Or watch the billows chafe and shatter ;
Or in the stuffy *salon* sit.

Struts bravely by a five-year chit,
Bugling as though his lungs would split ;
There is a babel of a clatter
Upon the deck.

Yet pearl-blue ocean circles it,
By the sky's sunny concave lit ;
O'er the wide main my thoughts I scatter,
Communing there with things that matter ;
The free waves with my life are knit
Upon the deck.

1912

GALLANT CASTLE-BUILDERS

By the Sea you toil an hour,
Gallant castle-builders ;
Keep and battlement and tower
Rise in peerless pomp and power,
Worth a mint of guilders,
Builders, builders, builders bold,
Gallant castle-builders.

'Gainst the tide defend your keep,
Gallant castle-builders,
Till the waves o'er turrets leap
And the army of the deep
All your skill bewilders,
Builders, builders, builders bold,
Gallant castle-builders.

Laugh, what matters one rebuff,
Gallant castle-builders ;
Rear a tower of sterner stuff ;
Britons' hearts are true and tough
From Scilly to St. Kilda's,
Builders, builders, builders bold,
Gallant castle-builders.

1910

ALONG THE SHORE

ALONG the shore the children play ;
Lords of a narrow realm are they
Between the headland and the sea ;
In right of joy they claim its fee,
Where all invites to holiday.

These lords high towers of sand array,
With shells and seaweed garlands gay,
And keep glad courts of chivalry
Along the shore.

Their castles brave endure a day ;
Then ride against them horsemen grey,
On steeds with white manes flowing free ;
And the bold barons, laughing, flee
With shouts defiant, while they may,
Along the shore.

1908

A RONDEAU

A RONDEAU write ? This afternoon,
With merry waves to serve for tune
And balmy airs to waft my bubble;
I'd do a Ballade, refrain double,
For you, Bright Eyes, with dancing shoon!

I'd carve it in some magic rune,
Beneath the glitter of the moon,
And make, whatever were the trouble,
A Rondeau right.

Yes, dearest, you shall have it soon,
Or you may dub me lazy loon ;
I'll end it pounding up the rubble
Or tramping through the cornfield stubble,
For you, Bright Eyes, who asked as boon
A Rondeau. Right !

1908

BANK HOLIDAY

BESIDE the waters of the bay,
The hurrying crowds keep holiday :
The summer zephyrs waft along
Chatter and frolic, shout and song :
Deafly float the sounds from far,
Where clamorous hurdy-gurdies are :
Blends the noise of the August spree
With the low mystic voice of the sea.

Out of the city, into the sun,
Pours the riot of fevered fun,
Into these spaces of bracing air,
Forth from life's monotone of care.
Here, for a day, may the heart be new,
Here, 'mid the sky's and the sea's twin blue,
For twelve fleet hours may toil escape
From its joyless moods of mole and ape.

One day of heaven the life to heal,
Then the callous grind of the world's hard wheel,
The sight of an earth more wide, perchance,
Than our narrow prison of circumstance,
Then endless morrows of pallid grey,
When all God's colour seems washed away :
Shall these the weary soul suffice
To give it dwelling in Paradise ?

Yet the great heart of man may win
'Gainst every fate his world-within,
• His spacious thought make holiday
Along the dusty, common way :
No joy shall fade, no love grow chill,
Each vision glow in glory still ;
With heart thrown wide to God, he'll be,
'Mid life's close bonds, at liberty.

ST. BEES HEAD

ST. BEGA's gulls, at matin-song,
Perch on the rocks in rows along ;
Their restless wings awhile are still
Beneath the ruddy headland hill ;
Their eager gabble dies away
And Sabbath-silence holds the bay.
The azure sea to azure air
Breathes forth the whisper of a prayer,
Till, in a fellowship of light,
Twin shining worlds of bliss unite :
Here would I raise my grateful psalm,
Where all is hushed in hallowed calm,
In nature's church with nature's words
Would worship with St. Bega's birds.

1911

THE NORMANDY COAST

SAINTE ADRESSE

The lighthouse-end of Le Havre is called Sainte Adresse from the speech of a captain, wrecked on this coast, who found his crew praying helplessly to St. Denis, and sang out to them : " My lads, Sainte Adresse (holy skill) is the only saint who can save you."

- " HELP from Denis cease to crave,"
Quoth the captain 'mid the blast,
" Only Sainte Adresse can save.

Ready there, my *garçons* brave,
Stand to cut away the mast ;
Help from Denis cease to crave.

Holy skill—or watery grave :
Time for pious prayers is past ;
Only Sainte Adresse can save."

When life's tempests round thee rage,
Do thy best with what thou hast ;
Help from Denis cease to crave.

Use the might and mind God gave ;
They are sterling saints at last ;
Only Sainte Adresse can save.

God hath made thee man, not knave,
Strength in heart and head hath cast ;
Help from Denis cease to crave,
• Only Sainte Adresse can save. •

1908

ÉTRETAT

THE cliffs of Étretat, the white cliffs, the white cliffs,
The sea of Étretat, the emerald, the emerald,
The beach of Étretat, pale violet, pale violet,
Praise God for His colours.

The boats of Étretat, red, yellow, red, yellow,
The men of Étretat, bronzed, bearded, bronzed, bearded,
The girls of Étretat, lithe, laughing, lithe, laughing,
Give thanks for life's gladness.

The gulls of Étretat, slow wheeling, slow wheeling,
The wind of Étretat, fresh, bracing, fresh, bracing,
The sky of Étretat, the azure, the azure,
These lift me to heaven.

1908

FELLOWSHIP

BLOW, wind of God, and set us free
From hate and want of charity,
Strip off the trappings of our pride,
And drive us to our brothers' side.

Shine, light of God, upon our face,
Kindle our hearts with beams of grace,
Beneath the gladness of thy sun
Our life with all mankind is one.

Fair world of God, whose teeming soil
With harvest's boon repays our toil,
May thy rich fullness forth declare
Thy Maker's universal care.

Speak, Son of God, Thy Father's heart ;
Teach, Son of Man, the brother's part,
Till earth shall be like heaven above
One holy family of love.

1908

ON THE ROAD

Down the valley, up the hill,
Avenued by poplars tall,
Pass along it, ye who will,
'Tis the same highroad for all.

Hurrying gain and blare of pride—
Groaning age and laughing May—
All the tumult of life's tide
Passes here and dies away.

From the valley, into sight, `
Flashing by in fevered chase,
Throbs the motor's pulse of might,
Eating up the miles apace.

O'er the hillside, down the lane,
Grave and stately, sure and slow,
Creaks the peasant's solemn wain,
Drawn by horses three arow.'

We who pace but once along,
They who rush at meteor speed,
By these peasants, patient, strong,
Seem a thin, unstable breed.

In this smiling country-side,
Only right of way have we ;
Those who in that waggon ride
Hold it in perpetual fee.

1908

RUE

A LAND of quiet distances, where grazed
 'Mid ordered ranks of trees the placid kine,
 I crossed, and marvelled at the incrustéd shrine
In worship of the Sacred Spirit raised.
O pious, patient folk of long ago,
 From life's calm levels ye have made aspire
 Unto the Holy Ghost a tongue of fire,
Hallowing your tranquil summers by its glow.

The smile of God your simple duties lit ;
In lowly hearts His Almighty name was writ ;
 Your common toil went not without reward ;
The Most High, with His humblest closely knit,
 Found a glad dwelling on your level sward,
 And ye have seen the glory of the Lord.

1908

RUE TO BERCK

THE sonnet's cadence suits my sober feet,
Way-worn and weary with a knapsack's weight ;
I am content to pass at even gait, .
Gay with the spring and poet-fancies sweet,
Content my brothers of the road to greet .
With halting phrase but heart by love elate,
Bowed by my load to feel their hard estate,
Blessed by my load with comradeship complete.

Thy burden take with courage day by day ;
Brave heart will shorten many a dusty mile ;
Thy burden take with love, and the whole way
Shall be a song and every face a smile ;
Thy burden take with thanks, then shall God's will
With sovran life thy mortal being fill.

1908

BERCK-PLAGE

FROM the houses to the sea
Burns a mile of yellow sand,
Where broad-bellied fishing-smacks,
Like sea-monsters, lie astrand.

Here the seamen mend their nets,
Make their workshop on the shore,
Take its harvest for their toll,
Know of right its secret lore.

Here the children dig and play,
Rank and race alike forgot ;
Were the world of children made,
Paradise were come, I wot.

Here the jaded city swarms,
Quaffs the sea-air round it flung,
In these tranquil spaces broad
Cools its fever and grows young.

Here, with invalid within,
Stands the wide-wheeled donkey-van ;
Doctor " Plage " will finish well
What the others but began.

On the beach the world has grown
Kindlier, simpler and more sane,
By this witchery of air
And the magic of the main.

1908

SPINDRIFT

BEFORE the wind, in wisps of smoke,
The curdled sand is swept to sea ;
The fisherwives, in hooded poke,
Toil up the beaches breathlessly.

I, with the sand, before the gust,
Like spindrift, far to lee am whirled,
Wraith of the gale, a wreath of dust,
A vagrant in a windy world.

Far with the hurrying sands I go,
In the pure air content to be ;
Before the wind of God I blow ;
And all His shore is home for me.

1908

THE COAST-GUARD PATH

THE coast-guard path I take awhile,
By white stones flanked from stile to stile,
Emerald the sea above the sand,
'Twixt wine-dark belts on either hand,
Where weed and wrack the rock-floor pile.

To left, the dusty road's defile,
With tram-poles strutted, mile on mile ;
I choose instead, you understand,
The coast-guard path.

My wants are few, a sun to smile,
A view to lure me by its wile,
Tobacco of a certain brand,
A breath of spring-time, pure and bland,
And lilt of poesy to beguile
The coast-guard path.

1910

THE COTSWOLD COUNTRY

NORTH GLOSTER SONG

WHILE Avon flows by Bredon Hill,
While Broadway girls are merry,
While clacks the wheel at Fladbury Mill,
And plies the Twynning Ferry,

CHORUS.

Sing heigh-ho for the Cotswold Hills,
Gloster and Esom Vales,
Teddington, Toddington,
Tredington, Boddington,
Taddington, Fiddington, Hailes.

While Cotswold fleeces yield their wool,
While Taynton stone is yellow,
And steep is Esom street and full,
And Pershore plums are mellow,
Sing heigh-ho for the Cotswold Hills, etc.

While evening chimes with abbey-bells,
And paints the hills with roses,
While love in timbered homesteads dwells,
And cider reddens noses,
Sing heigh-ho for the Cotswold Hills, etc.

While upland air is clean and hale,
While fish rise fast at Bredon,
While tall elms woo the summer gale
And make the land an Eden,
Sing heigh-ho for the Cotswold Hills, etc.

While Cotswold folk love honest ways,
Nor care for money blindly,
And while a kiss a forfeit pays
And Severn hearts are kindly,
Sing heigh-ho for the Cotswold Hills, etc.

FOR A SPIN

For a spin, when the hedges blush rosy in June,
And the scent of the hayfields hangs heavy at noon,
 As gay as a lover, I spring on my wheel, .
 My Pegasus welded of tubular steel,
And glide o'er the country with magical shoon.

Ah, then, if the roads are from motors immune,
Nor furrowed in ruts, nor with stones overstrewn,
 I coast down the hills, all afire with my zeal
 For a spin.

To skim in a skiff the Venetian lagoon,
To buffet the clouds in a buoyant balloon,
 May be joy at its highest ; but give me the feel
 Of the road sliding past, as the miles off I reel,
When the day and my heart and my wheel are in tune
 For a spin.

1909

COTSWOLD EDGE

HARK to the call of the August morn,
Feel on your cheeks its vagrant gale,
Wavering over the ripening corn,
Ride with me out of Evesham Vale ;
Leave behind you the dusty rail ;
Up from the Avon's fringing sedge
Mount, where the breezes never fail,
Spend your day on the Cotswold Edge.

Down below run the roads well-worn,
Out to the far horizon pale ;
There winds Severn like a twisted horn ;
Ride with me out of Evesham Vale,
Off, where the gossamer fairies sail,
Where elfins peep from the tangled hedge,
And pixies brew for you goblin ale,
Spend your day on the Cotswold Edge.

Here, drip fountains of dew new-born ;
Here, the sun wears his glittering mail,
And no tiniest being goes forlorn ;
Ride with me out of Evesham Vale ;
Ride, where nature is young and hale,
Ride, where your soul is out of pledge,
Off to the hills on man's ancient trail,
Spend your day on the Cotswold Edge.

ENVOY

Prince, lofty spirits the highlands scale ;
Ride with me out of Evesham Vale ;
Leave the silt for the base to dredge ;
Spend your day on the Cotswold Edge.

“ UNDER THE ELM ”

UNDER the elm, of whose close leaves
Nature a magic trellis weaves,
 I bide the hour of dying day,
 Watching the village boys at play
And the pert sparrows in the caves.

In the fat meadows feed the beeves ;
The farm-hands gather in the sheaves ;
 Life goes its immemorial way
 Under the elm.

One bough an idle scythe receives ;
Time sweats not here with rolled-up sleeves,
 But hums a drowsy roundelay
 And to my weary heart would say :—
“ Who findeth rest, the best achieves,
 Under the elm.”

1917

IN FLYING COACH

IN flying coach, amid October raw,
Over the bitter Cotswold's shoulders braw,
 Past Worsham bottom, where the witches croon,
 And Northleach, 'twixt workhouse and prison strewn,
Sped faded London folk to Cheltenham Spa.

You heard the Indian Nabob's loud guffaw,
The dreary droning of the man of law,
 Dandies that drawled and flirts that loved to spoon
 In flying coach.

Yet if some artist Georgian should draw
This simpering miss, that bully's square-set jaw,
 Yon post-boy jiggling to the fiddler's tune,
 Ourselves we'd see, a touch more coarsely hewn,
And hear our usual vacuous hee-haw
 In flying coach.

1916

TASTON

In the hamlet of Taston, near Charlbury, Oxon, there is a ruined wayside cross, and close to it, by the roadside, an upright monolith, about seven feet high, which gives its name to the place, and is called the Thor Stone.

HERE frowns the cruel Thor Stone on the slope,
Where Taston nestles 'neath the windy hill ;
There springs on high Christ's gracious cross of hope.

At night, hard eldritch faces mow and mope,
The brood of heathen hate and ancient ill ;
Here frowns the cruel Thor Stone on the slope.

By day, God's angels heaven's windows ope,
And all earth's need with shimmering light upfill ;
There springs on high Christ's gracious cross of hope.

For ages, through dark haunts of fear we grope,
Led dimly upward by some holier will ;
Here frowns the cruel Thor Stone on the slope.

Yet ever with foul hate love's might shall cope,
And broadening years with life victorious thrill ;
There springs on high Christ's gracious cross of hope.

Man with slow steps shall gain his highest scope ;
For from the earth sunward he riseth still :
Here frowns the cruel Thor Stone on the slope ;
There springs on high Christ's gracious cross of hope.

1912

BLOCKLEY HILL

ROUGH whirls the wind on Blockley Hill,
Surging in waves along the trees,
Whose myriad straining branches thrill
To the rude harping of the breeze :
Afar, as cloud and sunlight fleet,
Shines the great Church 'neath Campden's street.

Up to the wold through driving snow,
'Mid the storm's buffets, lies my way ;
On the wind's wing I onward blow,
Eager to taste his revels gay,
And of his nectar drink my fill,
Where streams the gale o'er Blockley Hill.

1916

“ WHERE AVON WINDS ”

WHERE Avon winds by weir and mill,
Stands Bredon Church 'neath Bredon hill,
 Builded to last while rivers run,
 While great hills glow to summer sun,
And man to God uplifts his will.

Here waves of carven zigzag spill
In founts of stone o'er door and sill,
 By wizard Norman fingers done,
 Where Avon winds.

Life here is solemn, sure and still,
Prizing its store of ancient skill,
 Dressed in perdurable homespun :
 Here the slow centuries blend in one :
Drink of their ruby past thy fill,
 Where Avon winds.

1915

BANBURY BELLS

DEAR to me are the Banbury Bells,
Ringing out on the trembling air,
• Monotone curfew-toll that tells
 "Eight at night, out with fire and care."
• Dearer still through the summer fair,
Birds a-lilt upon every thorn,
 Call the chimes, "For the day prepare;
Six o'clock of an August morn."

"Whoso buys, whosoever sells,"
List to the curfew tolling there,
"Leave your pennyweights, yards and ells;
 Eight at night; out with fire and care."
 "Wake, for the day bids do and dare;
Man for resolute work is born";
 So do the chiming bells declare
Six o'clock of an August morn.

Day is done and the curfew knells,
 "Rest is solace for life's despair;
All your gainings are broken shells;
 Eight at night; out with fire and care."
Day is here with her rapture rare,
Carol of chime and rouse of horn;
 Pulses of life throb everywhere,
Six o'clock of an August morn.

ENVOY.

Prince, tolls soon from thy turret stair,
 "Eight at night; out with fire and care"
Armour for valorous deeds is worn
• Six o'clock of an August morn.

1908

ST. SILVA'S CHURCH

A SHRINE,
Carven by more than human hands is here,
In this dim wood, mantling the hill's green slope.
The pillared trunks, with interlacing boughs,
Bear up their myriad tiny roofs of leaves,
A vault of gossamer, moving to the breath
Of the Almighty.

All this holy place
Is windowed to the sun; the whispering roof
Sifts out the light through panes of transparent green,
Or yellow gold, or through interstices
That let the blue sky in, and the far aisles
Are doored with azure, or with fretted boughs
Whose porches open to the dew-fresh turf
And the soft rose-light of the distant hills.

Here would I worship, while the Voice of God
Stirs in the branches and the wide sunlit land
Shines in the benediction of His smile.

1917

IN WHICHFORD WOOD

If a man had made you, straight and tall,
Myriad-leaved in the greenwood shade,
Or even had carved you, fronded, in stone, lifeless
and colourless,

That were art's miracle.

But you, the product of ages,
Ages that fashioned slow your perfection of traceried
twig and branch,
One among many comrades, diverse in form but your
peers in their beauty,
Home of the wild life of bird and beetle and moth,
Springing from mother-earth, jewelled with flowers,
You we find simple and artless,
One of God's commonplaces.

Oh, I would rather live with the lore of the woods,
Near to the heart of its Maker,
One with you and your brother-trees and the birds in
the tree-tops,
Their life pulsing within me,
Than be expert in all the skill of the Masters.

Yet hath the Artist his wonder,
Wonder that one of the creatures of God, His noblest,
Should have the divine within him, the seed of its spirit
creative,
Till his hand gains a touch of the craftsmanship of his
Maker,
And fashions some likeness
Of nature's commonplace,
Which, since a man made it divinely,
To man is a marvel immortal.

1919

IMITATION OF HORACE

(Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon aut Mytilenen, etc.)

OTHERS may Salisbury or Durham praise,
Or Oxford's halls of learning, set between
Cherwell and Thames, or hymn with tuneful lays
Cologne's Three Kings or Athens' grey-eyed Queen :
Some sing Columba and Iona's isle ;
Some Milan's hundred spires, and some the fane,
Most wonderful of Pisa's carven pile,
Where Art and Science sprang to birth again.
For me, York Minster, vast amid the vale,
Nor fretted Rouen, nor fair Byzant's dome,
Sings in my heart so ravishing a tale
As yon brown church above my Cotswold home.

O prattling Windrush, O Corinthian hills,
And swelling pastures browsed by hardy sheep,
Elms garrulous with rooks and sedgy rills,
Where the soft airs Elysian fragrance keep !
Temper stern life, my Plancus, with delight,
The open air, the wholesome country-side ;
Relax, betimes, ambition's fevered fight ;
Rest from thy cares, on Cotswold satisfied.

So thou, when some new day of action calls,
Again made eager for adventurous quest,
Shalt from the high-hung harness of thy halls
Gaily take down thy helm and dinted crest :
" Comrades," thou criest, " On with flashing brand,
Whither right leads, kindlier than fortune's frown,
Our ships lie ready on the golden strand :
Gladly we hail our failure or renown ;
To-day we heal our souls with country air,
To-morrow, on the deep, we do and dare."

1918

“ WHERE THAMES IS BORN ”

WHERE the great road leads to the shining West,
Past Burford Town thy dalliance begin ;
Obey the smorous zephyr's soft behest ;
Some vacant hours from droning summer win ;
With lover's eyes take the dear landscape in,
From laughing Windrush to the swelling hills ;
Let dreamy Fancy a web of magic spin
Where Thames is born from Cotswold's gushing rills.

Yellow with harvest to each tree-rimmed crest,
Glowes the large land, till we whose blood is thin
In this pure æther count all toil a jest,
With the ripe sun for Lord and Paladin.
Here outward peace with inward peace is twin,
As nature's spring of gladness overspills,
Making our hearts exhilarate within,
Where Thames is born from Cotswold's gushing rills.

O'er the great road the careless world has pressed,
Gallant and gamester with sardonic grin,
Youth in its heat, by the bright air caressed,
Fashion be-wigged, old age with wrinkled skin,
Passing with alien heart and scornful chin ;
But these broad heights the patient peasant tills,
Grown in his service to their spirit kin,
Where Thames is born from Cotswold's gushing rills.

ENVOY.

Comrades, the road whose bliss I sing herein,
Runs ever, the Western road, remote from ills ;
Here, at morn's prime, angels of God have been,
Where Thames is born from Cotswold's gushing rills.

1916

COTSWOLD SONNETS

I. FAIRFORD WINDOWS

HERE hold I converse with some spirit pure,
Translucent, many-windowed to display
The colours of our heaven-illuminated day—
The ardent ruby of life's adventure,
Faith's azure, russet for quiet thoughts demure,
Emerald for earth's and gold for heaven's array—
God shining through a soul celestial-gay,
A soul delighting in His mercies sure.

What matter if the storied glass contain
Crude thoughts, old legends? Be it mine to heed
The central glory, in each glowing pane
To find a worship nobler than its creed;
Child of his narrow age is every saint,
Yet doth with God's own light and tinctures paint.
1916

II. THE AMPLER CLIME

ON holy souls is dust of clinging earth ;
But in their spirits smiles an ampler clime
Of flowery meads that bloom in fadeless prime,
Where blithè airs blow and healing streams have birth.
In their glad hearts all springing life makes mirth
And Truth's high harmonies ring magical chime,
Their gaze, emancipate from capricious time,
Sees through our shell of being the inner worth.

As to crusader, over mantling hills,
The clustering spires of God's pure city rise,
And frowning paynim hosts and mortal ills
Pass from the ken of his enravished eyes,
So, from the Seer whom Truth's vision fills,
All passes, save his rapture of surprise.

1916

III. THE LAND 'TWINXT SEVERN AND COTSWOLD

THE land 'twixt Severn and Cotswold fills my gaze,
Belted with trees, that from this open height
Brim the wide distances with their delight,
Cloudlets of green swimming through summer haze.
Into this lower heaven my fancy strays,
Dear nook of England, with fair abbeys dight
And timbered homesteads, proof 'gainst Time's
despite ;
And I would linger in thy loitering ways.

The shining hills stoop down into thy bliss ;
The soft air woos thee with a lover's kiss ;
Thy heaven of yellowing corn and leafage green
Is God's tree-planted land of peace, I wis ;
Deerhurst He loved ; at Tewkesbury hath He been :
He dwells the Severn and Cotswold between.

1917

IV. "FROM SOME FAR-FRINGING WOOD"

FROM some far-fringing wood that views the plain,
I commune with the Spirit of the Air,
That, at a breath, paints earth in radiance rare,
Then, at a breath, turns all to grey again.
Now the hills vanish in a flaw of rain,
And the drenched vale is sheeted white and bare ;
Now the lawns glow in sunshine, dewy-fair,
And merry girls trip laughing down the lane.

So is this outer world of circumstance
Now sown with light and now by storm refined,
Now turned from gloom to glory at a glance
By the wise whimsey of the Spirit's wind,
When, o'er the lower earth of seeming chance,
Breathes some creative *fiat* of man's mind.

1918

V. PERSHORE

THE breath of ripe September after rain,
The insects drunk with sunshine, and the hills
Blue over winding Avon—Nature wills .
That I this noon should mount her harvest-wain,
Yellow with corn, and find the world grown sane,
A breed of honest folk, with simple ills,
Whose patient round toil's kindly custom fills,
Till chime the vesper-bells from Pershore's fane.

Here, in this droning, golden-laden cart,
Over God's teeming acres would I drive :
(Heigh-ho ! the garnered grain that makes men
thrive) :

Here, from man's hurrying tumult drawn apart,
In fruitful, gracious work my jubilant heart
Would recollect herself and be alive.

1918

VI. THE STRIPLING THAMES

I MUSED at Kelmscott by the stripling Thames,
His young stream yet untamed to bear the weight
And wealth of empire, still in play the mate
Of swimming lilies and frail osier stems.
Where spiders weaved their dewy diadems,
Through tranquil levels flowed he, heart elate,
Dreaming youth's fancies high, immaculate,
Of a freed folk and new Jerusalems.

Dream on ; for earth is young with blossoming springs,
And the birds pipe, and lambs beside thee skip ;
Some day our country, lit with fellowship,
Shall be the land of thy imaginings ;
And London town, along full manhood's stream,
Be builded worthy of thy youthful dream.

1916

VII. TIME IS YOUNG

YES, Time is young, and man is in the making,
Our dreams the rosy fingers of the morn,
Flushing the earth with gladness newly-born;
Yes, Time is young; the day is only breaking;
Our patient folk, their slumberous senses shaking,
Garnering together Freedom's ripened corn,
The visage marred that England long hath worn
Shall see in nobler loveliness awaking.

Work shall be service for the common weal,
And service fellowship in common life,
And fellowship shall larger life reveal
Of truth that salves and love that heals all strife.
Thus, in the day of God, our land shall be
Close-knit in one beloved community.
1916

VIII. COMRADES IN SERVICE

COMRADES in service, lift your eyes in joy ;
Behold our folk one undivided kith,
Mighty throughout with sturdy Freedom's pith,
Fit for the mastery of all employ,
Villagers hale in honest corduroy,
Myriad brain-workers, many a craft-wise smith,
All whom one mother-country fashioneth,
Glad in their work and free from greed's annoy.

Lift up your eyes ; see knowledge made a boon
For all to share ; and charity a hand
Holding the helpless safe ; and our fair land
Full-manned ; and wealth and welfare brought in tune.
Comrades beloved, lift up your lovers' eyes ;
Behold loved England through love's service rise.

1916

IX. GOD IN HIS GARDEN

WAKE, for the day-spring thrills the landscape through ;
Wake, let night's darkness for the night suffice ;
Morn's prime restores our wasted Paradise ;
Wake, with fresh heart to dare, fresh will to do.
All the glad land is thick with tremulous dew ;
Sod, flower and leaf breathe out an odorous spice ;
A mystic vision shall your eyes entice,
God in His Garden, making all things new.

Singing He works, blithe in His Garden's joy ;
Sorrowing He works, sad at His Garden's ill ;
Never He pauses from His dear employ,
Life of our life, will springing in our will :
And, at His side, ye who the vision see
With Him shall work in blissful company.
1916

MISCELLANEOUS

BENEDICITE

Suggested by the Ballade of Clément Marot called "Chant de May."

IN this blithe, merry month of May,
Ye forest-trees, in myriads throwing
Your leafy pennons to the day,
Ye flaunting flowers, the meadows strowing,
Ye fields, where grateful kine are lowing,
Ye flocks that feed the grass along,
After your loving Shepherd going,
Give to the Maker praise in song.

Friend, if the hurrying world's array
Holds lovers, earthlier passions showing,
Refuse 'mid their allures to stay,
Thy heart on God alone bestowing :
List to the wind's low anthem blowing ;
List to the laverock's carol strong,
His poet-soul in thanks outflowing ;
Give to the Maker praise in song.

When robin sings a roundelay,
Now Boreas has ceased his snowing,
When woods with primroses are gay,
When meads are ready for the mowing,
When all is glad with joy of growing,
No thanks to earthly things belong ;
The seed shall boast not of its sowing ;
Give to the Maker praise in song.

ENVOY.

To the world's Lover, love is owing,
Rising in chorus, loud and long,
Till earth, in Hallelujah glowing,
Give to the Maker praise in song.

A MORNING HYMN

FATHER, unto Thee thanksgiving
Rises fresh this morning bright ;
Hearts must sing the joy of living,
And the gladness of the light :
Earth's exulting lips adore Thee,
Kindled by the sun's warm kiss,
Sea and hill and sky before Thee
Shine in fellowship of bliss.

Night her sable curtain raises,
Daybreak floods the world with song,
Thousand voices tell Thy praises,
To Thy heart our hearts belong ;
With our life Thy life uniteth,
In our spirits glows Thy grace,
All within, without, delighteth
In the glory of Thy face.

By Thy light, Divine Revealer,
Guide us in Truth's upward way,
By Thy love, Almighty Healer,
Cleanse and strengthen us to-day ;
All our service gay with singing,
Heart to heart we toil and fight,
Praises for Thy sunshine bringing,
Joyful children of the light.

1911

“ AN HOUR TO SPEND ”

AN hour to spend, a waiting-room
Which two archaic lamps illumine ;
Cheerless and evil is my plight ;
Shut is the bookstall for the night,
Nor news nor novels ease my doom.

The trains go roaring through the gloom,
And on the platform dank I fume :
Ah ! with the Board I should delight
An hour to spend.

Yet from my thorns I pluck a bloom
Whose fragrance shall my lot perfume :
Though but a bookless, luckless wight,
My prosy fate I put to flight
As with my fancy I presume
An hour to spend.

1908

THIS AND THAT

In Argosies of gold we trust,
And fence our lives about with ease;
Man foots it stoutly in the dust. .

Delights of earth our souls encrust,
Life's virtue smothering by degrees;
In Argosies of gold we trust.

Flares past pride's motor in the gust
(The despots of the road are these);
Man foots it stoutly in the dust.

In clash of thrust and counterthrust
The hour of spacious being flees;
In Argosies of gold we trust.

For life, not softly living, lust;
Change not glad wine for cloying lees;
Man foots it stoutly in the dust. ,

To fellowship thy heart adjust,
A world of lovers till it sees;
In Argosies of gold we trust;
Man foots it stoutly in the dust.

1908

“ IN BOUNDS CONFINED ’

IN bounds confined should run my song,
Winding the pleasant meads along,
Twining and twisting with the rhyme,
And flowing gaily all the time
With stream that carols fresh and strong.

No ride for me from Aix to Ghent,
No flight where wingèd fancies throng,
A martyr to my rondeau, I’m
In bounds confined.

Yet, girded with love’s dainty thong,
Buckled by poesy’s silver prong,
My slender spire of thought I climb,
Amid its bells my footsteps chime,
Content to go the stars among,
In bounds confined.

1908

MY BABY-BOY

My baby-boy with yellow hair
Goes climbing up the dizzy stair ;
 He makes me nervous, I confess ;
 But mother only answers, " Yes,
" His little feet go everywhere."

At midnight swells upon the air
His little voice in music rare ;
 I murmur in my anguish, " Bless
 My baby-boy."

Lord of the home, king free from care,
Who drives his subjects to despair,
 Most sovereign through his helplessness,
 He bends and binds by his caress ;
Eight lieges love his yoke to wear,
 My baby-boy !

1908

ROSES RED

"DEAR God, the earth is bright ;
My heart is light ;
Bless all of us, and all the world, to-night."

So comes the childish prayer
Adown the stair ;
I thank God for the happy heart up there.

She has her paradise
Of fragrant spice,
And roses red ; but cannot know their price.

Yet why should roses bloom
Within her room,
While the grey world needs myriads for perfume ?

Has the dear God, I trow,
Roses enow
For all, clustering upon His golden bough ?

•
Red roses to emboss
All pain and loss,
Roses that blossom on a thorn-crowned cross ?

Roses ? One royal rose
There, fadeless, blows,
Whose odorous attar through the ages goes.

1913

“ THE WORLD HAS FETTERS ”

THE world has fetters cruel for gentle minds,
Chill want, hard penury and iron toil;
A routine pacing of the prison-soil,
And then again the hungry treadmill grinds.

I see their pallid faces, garret-pent ;
I hear the wearing of their souls away :
Not love but greed is lord and king to-day,
And for dead gold our living gold is spent.

No biting air our bubble wealth must greet,
Made by a breath and by a breath o'erthrown ;
While heaven-sprung man, in whom God's life is
blown,
Lies crushed and wasted 'neath our careless feet.

The galley-slave must labour at the oar,
With bruised eyes confronting life's despair,
His mind divine untaught to do and dare,
Pinioned his fiery soul that longs to soar. .

But God an equal balance holds for all ;
His love shall heal the bruises man has made ;
Some feast with Him ; the rest shall sink afraid
Into the darkness of the outer hall.

1886

“DEEM ME NOT LESS THE LIEGE OF THY BEHEST”

DEAR heart, who rulest ever in my breast,
And through my morning breathest, dewy-sprent,
When to my lips thy queenly face is bent,
Deem me not less the liege of thy behest
If, as a lake by wafts of spring caressed,
I, trembling under love's sweet lavishment,
Should mirror not thy heaven of content,
Thy tender form and gracious eyes of rest.

For 'tis thy kiss hath blotted from my lake
Thy soft fair face and stirred my ravished thought
Into a myriad ripples, each a glass
Wherein thy spirit her fire of love doth wake.
Thus in my soul thy very life is wrought,
Nor may thy spirit's shining empire pass.

1895

MAXIMS

WHEN life's rapids round you roar,
Strong of arm and stout of thigh,
Use alert the dexterous oar,
Paddle in your own canoe.
When the waters, calm and blue,
Gleam across the tranquil bay,
Man the cutter ; row it through ;
" All together, lads, away."

When you feel the crowd a bore,
Home a worry, work a stew,
Seek the spaces of the shore,
Paddle in your own canoe.
When the world wants service new,
(You the lifeboat's captain, say),
Whistle up the gallant crew,
" All together, lads, away."

When truth's mazes you explore,
Following some slender clue,
Lips athirst and fingers sore,
Paddle in your own canoe.
When its treasure waits for you,
Then, with generous heart and gay,
Give your friends the cry and hue,
" All together, lads, away."

ENVOY.

Self-reliant maxim true,
" Paddle in your own canoe " ;
Wider words for life to-day,
" All together, lads, away."

1909

“WATCH AND PRAY”

WE falter in our faith and say,
“Where is Thy love, O God, to-day ?

Shall raging hate and ruthless sword
Devour mankind ? How long, O Lord ? ”

Christ, agonizing against sin,
Answers the questioning soul within :

“Wouldst thou indeed keep watch with Me,
And know my dread Gethsemane,

Hath hate within thy heart no root,
And in thy deeds no poisonous fruit ;

The callous might that owns no law,
Pride’s blindness, greed’s usurious paw,

Envy that covets, coward mistrust,
Cruel fear and soul-destroying lust—

Hast thou ’gainst these waged ceaseless strife,
And won by prayer and fasting life ;

Then made thy brother’s dying thine,
And spent on him thy life divine,

Counting thy passion gain not loss,
Rejoicing in the bitter cross ?

Then mayst thou know the love I bear,
The crown of biting thorns I wear,

My dying, my victorious power,
Yea, watch and pray with Me that hour.”

AT REST FROM HIS WORKS

THIS clinging vest of verdure, closely woven,
Grass, fern and moss and flower, in myriad life,
These mantling trees, each tree a leafy world,
The matted heather on the rosy hills,
And all her lavish life, exalt her name—
Of “mother-earth.” Yet are we made aware,
On the bare mountain or the naked crag,
Or the waste desert, that, apart from these,
Earth hath a mystic being of her own,
And with the billowing sea and arching sky
Is mated by the Maker of them all
In trinity of elemental life.

So God Himself hath being in His works,
Clothing His majesty, but, without works,
In undivided being and naked life,
Amid bare vastness and pure silences,
And heaving deeps that answer heaving deeps,
And under heavens of light, we feel within us,
Hushed in awe, the sense of the unrevealed,
The presence of God resting from His works,
The infinite at home in His own life ;
Yet, even as we feel it, leaps His love
Out of the infinite into our littleness ;
And lo, the Father’s arms are round His child.

1908

THE AUTUMN LEAF

INTO the moorland stream it fell,
My curling leaf, and swam away,
Proudly as Spanish caravel
With silver out of Mexique Bay;
September splendours round it clung,
As down it rode, the heath among.

So would I fall some autumn-tide,
When summer's meed of work is o'er;
Would gaily sail a world more wide,
Nor tarry on the earthward shore;
Would gladly float from life's sere tree
To thy kind stream, eternity.

1907

DECLINING YEARS

For careless heart I crave, and a glad mind,
And spirit purged from harshness to my fellows,
For years, whom summer's ardour makes more kind,
And autumn mellows.

Croesus, with war-loan bulging, ever sunned
By dubious gains from speculation hectic,
Loses life's savour, while he grows rotund
And apoplectic.

Hortensius, skilled his client's case to win,
Night-vigils keeping like pale monk of Cluny,
Acquires with time a wrinkled parchment skin
And judgeship *puisé*.

The vapid Fulvus, who his lands did wage
On the day's favourite in the Coliseum,
Seeks as asylum for his decorous age
The Athenæum.

War-loving Lentulus, whose eagles went
Through Parthian wastes from swiftly-rushing Jordan,
Must now with humbler office be content,
Vicar's churchwarden.

While Marcus, hot with democratic fire,
The hope of Rome, the darling of the Forum,
Ripens from senator to Tory squire,
•Chairman of quorum.

Happier is Grosphus with his yellowing corn,
Colonial ranche and fountain's joyous prattle,
O'er whose wide pastures range with tossing horn
Sicilian cattle,

Or grandsire, wooer once of laughing loves,
Mid care of herds and wholesome toil of tillage,
Whom no ambition lures beyond the groves
Of Umbrian village.

Him, simple songs suffice and homely fare,
The dower of Nature, genial provider,
Rashers of bacon, and, for vintage rare,
Ausonian cider.

Yet, Flaccus, joys diviner we may gain,
Whom Fancy with her dappled hues suffuses;
And in our Sabine villa entertain
The gracious Muses;

May to the willow tune our plaintive reeds,
And, under whispering elms, tell lovers' quarrels;
Or sing to stalwart oaks heroic deeds,
Lyrics to laurels.

Nor envious greed, nor tyranny's caress,
Irks here our bliss, with Fancy in a garden,
Nor may the city's soul-destroying stress
Our spirits harden.

Nature and Art shall give us fadeless spring
And deck our web of song with immortal fringes;
Till comes the hour, when we no more shall sing
This side Death's hinges.

1917

DEATH'S AFTERMATH

BEYOND, earth's vanity that vanisheth

Behold the light surpassing all adorning,
Which turns the dusky shadow of our death
To cloudless morning.

Life's iron, 'gainst these flinty, evil days

Striking its spark, has died not out in blindness,
But flames to glory, gaining at a gaze,
God's loving-kindness.

The feet of clay turn clay; dust sinks to dust;

But the heart's poise, the spirit's tense endeavour,
The will to dare, the soul's adventurous thrust,
Endure for ever.

These, in death's hour, to larger life dispart—

Freedom, unfettered, their immortal wages,
And still they mingle with Earth's inmost heart,
Bracing the ages.

1918

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